

Introduction

A well-read citizen is a well-informed citizen. Through the facilities of the public library, great vistas are opened to the people of New Bern. The library has something for all citizens. The businessman has at his fingertips a great storehouse of valuable research materials; the student has before him the knowledge of the world; the workingman has the most up-to-date information to help him grow in his job; the housewife has "how to" books on all phases of homemaking; and the child has available to him books that will aid in the development of a sound citizen. There are books to satisfy leisure time, to develop spiritual and creative capacities and to keep one well informed about the world around him. Progress in all fields of knowledge is on display at the library.

The Future Potential of the Library is Unlimited. It is axiomatic to say that the better educated the populace is, the greater is their use of the library. A community college will probably, within this planning period, be established in the City. This will afford a greater opportunity for learning not only among the young but also among those who have been out of school for several years. Another recent development that will tax the services of the library is "rapid reading." There are several methods currently in use that can increase one's reading speed as much as ten times. Several public school systems have incorporated a course in rapid reading into their curriculum. The establishment of a community college and rapid reading can be expected to cause a great increase in library use.

New Bern's Library

Library service was originally provided in New Bern by a subscription (private) library. The facilities of the library were made available to the general public for the first time in March of 1912. Since that time, many changes have occurred in library service. One of the more important changes came in 1947 when New Bern entered into an agreement with Craven and Pamlico Counties to form a regional library.

This regional library, a part of the state system is governed by an eight-member Regional Library Board composed of the Superintendents of the County Schools and three members from each County who are appointed by their respective County Commissioners. The City of New Bern is not directly represented on this Board. At the City level, there is a fifteen-member local board. This self-perpetuating Board whose members are interested in New Bern's library service, owns the building which houses the central collection. This "library" building was constructed in 1770 as a private home.

In addition to the main library mentioned above which houses the central collection for the system, there is one branch library in the City located on West Street. This branch, less than ten years old, was built specifically as a library.

Comparisons have been made between the Craven-Pamlico Regional Library and the libraries of surrounding counties with the exception of Jones County, which in 1961 when these statistics were